

## Call for Proposals

**Submission Title:** Reciprocity in Community Engagement: Implications of a Concept Analysis for Research

**Reference ID:** 0057-000189

## Contact

**Contact First Name\*** Lina

**Contact Last Name\*** Dostilio

**Contact Title/Position** Graduate Student and Director, Academic Community Engagement

**Contact Affiliation/Institution** Duquesne University

**Address 1** 600 Forbes Avenue

**Address 2**

**City** Pittsburgh

**State/Province** PA

**Zip/Postal Code** 15282

**Country** United States of America

**Contact Phone** 412-302-4810

**Contact Email Address\*** dostilioL@duq.edu

**Review Qualification** Yes

**Review Area of Expertise** community-university partnerships; service-learnign institutionalization; reciprocity; qualitative research methods

**Additional Authors?** Yes

### Additional Authors

Author First Name	Author Last Name	Author Organization/Affiliation	Author Email Address	Order
Patti	Clayton	PHC Ventures	patti.clayton@curricularengagement.com	1
Lina D.	Dostilio	Duquesne University	dostiliol@duq.edu	2
Kathleen	Edwards	University of North Carolina Greensboro	keedwar2@uncg.edu	3
Barbara	Harrison	Brock University	barbara.a.harrison@gmail.com	4

Brandon	Kliwer	University of Georgia	bkliwer@uga.edu	5
---------	--------	-----------------------	-----------------	---

## Proposal

**Proposal Title\*** Reciprocity in Community Engagement: Implications of a Concept Analysis for Research

**Presentation Format** Conversion Hour

**Presentation Track\*** Community partnerships and reciprocity

**Abstract\*** “Reciprocity” occupies a defining role in community engagement yet is frequently used in scholarship without definition or critical examination. For example: does reciprocity imply mutually-beneficial transactions or co-created, power-shifted partnerships, or both? Unexamined and/or unintentionally differing conceptualizations of reciprocity can lead to confusion in the field’s knowledge base. This session shares results from a multidisciplinary concept analysis (evolutionary biology, philosophy, psychology, and leadership, from western and non-western cultures) in which we examine tension points in the contested nature of reciprocity and differing ways to operationalize it as a construct in research and invite participants to co-construct an emerging research agenda.

## Proceedings Narrative

Please enter your research proposal narrative in 1000 words or less. Complete each section of the research narrative. For non-data-based proposals, please fill out the appropriate sections. If a section is not application to your proposal, please enter N/A. Conference Proceedings will be developed from accepted research narratives.

**Background/Problem\*** “Reciprocity” occupies a defining role in community engagement yet is frequently used in scholarship without definition or critical examination. For example: does reciprocity imply mutually-beneficial transactions or co-created, power-shifted partnerships, or both? Unexamined and/or unintentionally differing conceptualizations of reciprocity can lead to confusion in the field’s knowledge base while straining, even misdirecting, the community engagement practice that attempts to advance social change. The research shared in this session problematizes what seems to be a pervasive yet un-critical reliance on this concept.

**Framework/Lit Review\***

The concept and intention of reciprocity occupies a central, often defining, role in community engagement literatures (Cox, 2000; Daynes, Howell & Lindsay, 2003; Jacoby, 2003). For example, Carnegie’s Community Engagement Classification defines community engagement as “the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Driscoll, 2008, p. 39). This and related definitions suggest a common understanding of community engagement, which centers commitment to reciprocity in community/university relationships, as well as a common understanding of reciprocity. However, Chrislip and Larson (1994, in Lowery et al, 2006, p. 53) suggest that reciprocity is seen through a “kaleidoscope lens,” in which meanings vary. Our research explores multiple conceptualizations of reciprocity, tension points between them, and associated implications for operationalizing the concept in research.

Reciprocity as a concept requires deeper scholarly examination, insofar as it

informs systems and structures that define university-community partnerships and broader commitments to democratic engagement (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009) and as it can serve as a defining construct in research related to community engagement partnerships. Recent works provide a starting place for our inquiry. Saltmarsh et al. (2009) distinguish between the “mutuality” of technocratic engagement and the “reciprocity” of democratic engagement. Jameson, Jaeger, and Clayton (2010) differentiate reciprocity into “thin” and “thick” versions, the former encapsulating understandings related to mutual benefit and the latter understandings related to co-creation. d’Arlach, Sanchez and Feuer (2009) and Henry and Breyfogle (2006, p. 27) point to the transformative potential for “evolutionary change in the service-learning relationship” as another dimension of reciprocity.

**Design/Measures/Analysis\*** We are undertaking research to develop a meaningful theoretical and empirical account of reciprocity. The concept review that frames our research agenda and the proposed session is analogous to that undertaken by Rogers (2001). Responding to a similar “lack of clarity in the definition of reflection, its antecedent conditions, its processes, and its identified outcomes,” Rogers engaged with ambiguity and variation in meanings of the term “reflection,” providing “in-depth analysis and synthesis of selected theoretical approaches” that sought to establish “a broad and ultimately integrated understanding of the concept” (p. 38). As one aspect of the session, we will share results from a comprehensive review of the Michigan Journal for Community Service Learning and Advances in Service-Learning Research to help establish the various conceptualizations of reciprocity in the literature base.

Our method is indebted to Foucault’s genealogical approach (1961/2005; 1977/1995) in that it tracks how historical understandings of reciprocity intersect with knowledge and power. We are investigating conceptualizations of reciprocity within a range of bodies of theory, drawing on disciplines as disparate as evolutionary biology, philosophy, psychology, and leadership; and we are gathering and interrogating current and historical articulations of reciprocity from non-western cultures. The various meanings associated with the concept arise in the context of and reinforce particular epistemological stances and hegemonic systems. Our work seeks to clarify these connections, surface implications for research questions and designs, and catalyze a research agenda on reciprocity and its dynamics in the partnership processes at the heart of community engagement.

**Results/Findings/Interpretations\*** The multidisciplinary concept review yields the following findings, offered here by way of illustration: (1) current research generally does not define, theoretically or empirically, the underlying conceptualization of reciprocity; (2) transactional or exchange-related understandings of reciprocity predominate; and (3) representations of reciprocity in the literature are largely rooted in a western orientation. As a result of these and others findings, we believe it is necessary to advance conceptual clarity around reciprocity in much the same way as the concept of “partnership” has been problematized and examined (see for example Clayton, Bringle, Senor, Huq, & Morrison, 2010; Enos & Morton, 2003). Doing so is important for the following reasons: (1) We are unable to build a sound knowledge base and cumulative line of inquiry until we parse the various theoretical and empirical distinctions among the meanings of reciprocity. (2) Lack of clarity with regard to the meanings of reciprocity unnecessarily limits the research questions that are deemed significant, which closes off a range of possible questions and inquiry into the phenomenon. (3) Narratives enshrine certain power dynamics and social interactions; without questioning or examining the meanings and constitution of reciprocity but often assuming a given, western and technocratic meaning, we assert a working model of reciprocity that may limit us to normative practices and research.

**Implications/Conclusions\*** During the conversation hour, we will incorporate an activity designed to surface various understandings of reciprocity among participants, share some of the findings of our multidisciplinary concept review as a framework for discussion, and engage in conversation around the sources and significance of various conceptualizations of reciprocity. We will collaboratively and critically reflect

on the nature of recent investigations of reciprocity in community engagement partnerships, on the ways related research has been grounded in and guided by an insufficiently critical orientation toward the concept, and on opportunities for more precise operationalization of the construct in current/future research.

## References

- Clayton, P., Bringle, R., Senor, B., Huq, J., & Morrison, M. (2010). Differentiating and assessing relationships in service-learning and civic engagement: Exploitative, transactional, or transformational. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 16*(2), 5-22.
- d'Arlach, L., Sanchez, B., & Feuer, R. (2009). Voices from the community: A case for reciprocity in service-learning. *Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning, 16*(1), 5-16.
- Daynes, G., Howell, S. L., & Lindsay, N. K. (2003). The ecosystem of partnerships: A case study of a long-term university-community partnership. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 8*(2), 135-150.
- Driscoll, A. (2008). Carnegie's community engagement classification: Intentions and insights. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 40*, 38-41. doi: 10.3200/CHNG.40.1.38-41
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York, NY: Vintage Books. (Original work published 1977).
- Henry, S. E., & Breyfogle, M. L. (2006). Toward a new framework of "server" and "served": De(and re)constructing reciprocity in service-learning pedagogy. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, 18*(1), 27-35.
- Rogers, R. (2001). Reflection in higher education: A concept analysis. *Innovative Higher Education, 26*, 37-57.
- Jameson, J., Clayton, P., & Jaeger, A. (in press). Community engaged scholarship as mutually- transformative partnerships. In L. Harter, J. Hamel-Lambert, & J. Millesen (Eds.), *Participatory partnerships for social action and research*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Further references available upon request - cut due to word limit.